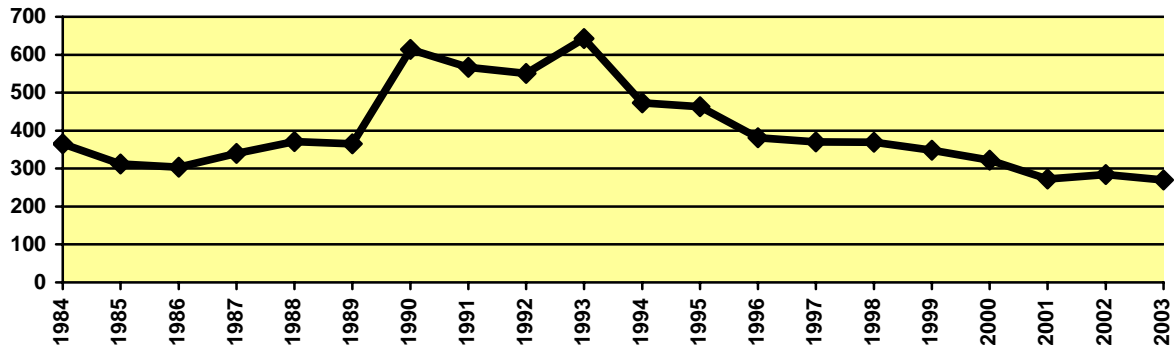


ASSAULT

Aggravated Assault describes an unlawful attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury. This type of assault is usually accompanied by the use of a weapon or by means likely to produce death or great bodily harm. Attempts are included since it is not necessary that injury result when a gun, knife, or other weapon is used which could and probably would result in serious personal injury if the crime were successfully completed.

**Twenty Year Review:
Aggravated Assault in Cambridge, 1984-2003**



284 reported in 2002 • 271 reported in 2003

Assault is a violent crime that typically arises in “the heat of the moment”. Unlike the crime of robbery, assault seldom involves a motivation of personal gain. Offenders of aggravated assaults will often regret the incident subsequent to its occurrence.

Aggravated assault is, a very serious crime. The severity of aggravated assault lies in the serious injury caused to victims, which can range from bruises to knife wounds. Aggravated assault is not to be taken lightly.

Over the past twenty years, aggravated assault reached its peak in the early 1990's. Between 1984 and 1989, it registered about 350 incidents per year; in 1990, it suddenly jumped by forty-one percent to an unprecedented 614 reports. It peaked at 643 in 1993 and has been on a steady decline over the past ten years. Within the last five years, aggravated assaults have averaged 299 incidents a year, a 27% decrease from the five previous years.

A good portion of these fluctuations can be attributed to the frequency of which the crime is *reported* rather than the frequency of its actual occurrence. As domestic violence awareness has increased over the last decade, so has the willingness of domestic violence victims to report abuse to the police.

Relationships

Another way to look at aggravated assaults is to classify the relationship between the offender and the victim. Many, but not all, of the assault categorizations are based on this relationship. This list shows the relationship between the offender and the victim in the 271 aggravated assaults in 2003:

Relationship	Total	%
Stranger or Unknown	119	44%
Misc. Acquaintance	35	13%
Romantic Partner	31	11%
Spouse	13	5%
Ex-Romantic Partner	9	3.3%
Parent/Child	18	7%
Co-Worker/Employee	9	3.3%
Client/Patron	0	0%
Neighbor	4	1.5%
Sibling	6	2%
Ex-Spouse	1	0.4%
Schoolmate	11	4%
Landlord/Tenant	1	0.4%
Third Lover	4	1.5%
Teacher/Coach	0	0%
Grandparent/child & Other Family*	6	2%
Roommate	4	1.5%

*Other family includes stepparent/child, uncle/aunt, and niece/nephew.

Despite advances made by domestic violence victim advocates in recent years, experts estimate that between sixty and eighty percent of domestic assaults are never reported to the police. However, lack of reporting is not unique to domestic incidents. It is very likely that factors including apathy, fear of police contact, embarrassment, and other factors lead to underreporting of various assaults involving acquaintances, gangs, and conflicts among the homeless. The result is that assault statistics must be viewed with extreme care. Since domestic assaults and assaults among acquaintances dominate the percentages, the crime naturally registers high in areas that have a high residential population. These neighborhoods include Area 4, Riverside, and North Cambridge. Domestic assaults and other domestic crimes are reviewed in the *Domestic Crimes* section of this report.

Neighborhood Patterns and Trends Observed in 2003

The following is a synopsis of neighborhoods with concentrations of a particular aggravated assault categories as well as anecdotal accounts of some of the most serious incidents of the year (not including domestic incidents).

- **NEIGHBORHOODS:**

- **North Cambridge** incurred a disproportionate number of Affray/Brawls, but there was no discernable pattern to these incidents.
- **Riverside** had the highest number of bar/alcohol related incidents, which concentrated during the spring months. This trend can be attributed to the neighborhood's proximity to Central Square and its high traffic of visitors and bar goers.
- **Area 4** had a high number of domestic incidents, which is attributable to the high residency rate in this neighborhood. Area 4 also had the highest number of juvenile/gang related aggravated assaults. One trend in these incidents is the use of BB (pellet) guns to intimidate victims. Unfortunately, several of the incidents in 2003 involved suspects shooting at victims multiple times, sometimes lodging pellets in the victim.
- **Cambridgeport**, as is the typical pattern, carries the most homeless related incidents, which are concentrated during the summer months.
- **Area 4, Cambridgeport** and **Riverside** together made up the majority of the unprovoked incidents. However, there was no discernable pattern to these incidents. The numbers can be credited to the business centers that draw in visitors and create densities of people traffic.

- During the summer there were a few shooting incidents. The most serious of these are detailed below.
 - In June of this year, while in Riverside, a young man was signaled to exit a bar. Upon exiting the location the man was met by an ambush of gunshots. Although the victim received several bullet wounds, he survived the attack. An arrest was made for this incident.
 - Less than a week after the preceding incident, another young man reportedly sat in his vehicle, while stopped in Riverside, adjusting the radio when suddenly he heard a "firing" noise. The man received multiple shot wounds, but was able to drive himself to the hospital, where he was treated for his injuries.
 - The third notable shooting incident involved a young man shooting at victims as they exited their vehicle. No one was injured in this occurrence, but an arrest was made. The victims of the shooting were apparently mistaken for another target.

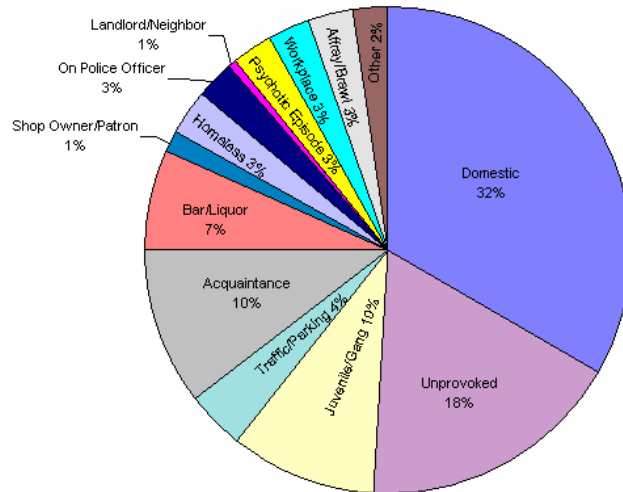
GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF AGGRAVATED ASSAULTS FROM 2000 TO 2003	NEIGHBORHOOD	2001	2002	2003
	East Cambridge	34	32	23
	M.I.T. Area	4	3	6
	Inman/Harrington	35	22	30
	Area 4	39	52	53
	Cambridgeport	40	43	32
	Mid-Cambridge	18	26	16
	Riverside	32	23	37
	Agassiz	1	6	1
	Peabody	14	10	15
	West Cambridge	16	19	13
	North Cambridge	29	33	34
	Cambridge Highlands	5	9	3
	Strawberry Hill	5	4	7
	Total	272	282*	270*

*Please note that 2 incidents in 2002 and 1 incident in 2003 occurred at unknown locations, therefore these incidents were not included in this breakdown. .

AGGRAVATED ASSAULT CLASSIFICATIONS

TYPE	2002	2003
Domestic	88	90
Unprovoked	31	48
Juvenile/Gang	33	26
Traffic/Parking	15	11
Acquaintance	41	28
Bar/Liquor	16	18
Shop Owner/Patron	7	4
Homeless	13	8
On Police Officer	6	7
Landlord/Neighbor	2	2
Psychotic Episode	1	7
Workplace	10	8
Affray/Brawl	17	8
Other	4	6

Classification percent of Aggravated Assaults



Simple Assault

Simple Assaults, unlike aggravated assaults, are not scored among the Part I Crimes (Index Crimes). Simple assaults do not involve the use of a dangerous weapon and are not intended to cause serious injury. Examples of simple assault include a shove, a punch in the stomach, or a slap in the face. On average, we receive 500 to 600 simple assault reports annually.

During the past year 598 simple assault reports were reported to the Cambridge Police. This number of incidents indicates a five percent decrease from the 630 incidents reported in 2002. Over all, simple assaults have shown a steady slow decline in the past five years. However, the 714 assaults registered in 2001 are the highest in over a decade. Lack of reporting is a problem in simple assaults, greater than aggravated assault, because most incidents do result in minimal or no injury.

Similar to aggravated assaults, domestic incidents make up over a third of the total reported simple assaults. Likewise, unprovoked incidents follow, approximately thirteen percent of simple assaults in 2003, and acquaintance simple assaults make up eleven percent. A higher percentage of traffic/parking related incidents are reported as simple assaults when compared to aggravated incidents, but bar related incidents and brawls have a lower percentage rate in simple assaults.

The top neighborhoods for simple assaults were Cambridgeport, Area 4 and Riverside. All three neighborhoods combined made up the majority of reported juvenile/gang related incidents and traffic/parking incidents. Cambridgeport had the concentration of bar associated simple assaults, and, combined with Riverside, the two neighborhoods made up over a third of the landlord/tenant incidents.

Preventing Assault

- Check out the tips for preventing rape and street robbery to prevent unprovoked, "street" assaults.
- If you have been abused by, or are in fear of, your domestic partner or spouse, get help. The problem usually becomes worse if it is not addressed. The "domestic crimes" section of this report lists telephone numbers that you or your partner can call to seek assistance.
- Report assault when it happens, even if you do not believe it to be "serious." Assaults that are not reported cannot be considered by police administrators when they make decisions about how to allocate manpower and funds; if there is a problem with a bar, a household, a school, or any other place where assaults are likely to happen, *the police need to know about it.*
- Do *not* allow yourself to be drawn into arguments about traffic or parking incidents. Keep calm when behind the wheel of your car. If another driver commits a violation or threatens you, take down his registration information and report it to the police. Hundreds of people are killed each year because of "road rage."
- Unless they have security forces for that purpose, shop managers and clerks should not attempt to physically detain shoplifters. Most of the "Shop Owner/Patron" assaults began as shoplifting incidents. Instead, get a full description of the shoplifter and call the police. If he refuses to stay, let him go.